

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent & Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant initial general and special education independent school approval, to serve a maximum of 20 students ages 11-22 in grades 7-12, within the disability categories of emotional disturbance, specific learning disabilities, other health impairment, and learning impairment, to The Zone in Barre, Vermont?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Vermont State Board of Education grants initial general and special education independent school approval, to serve a maximum of 20 students ages 11-22 in grades 7-12, within the disability categories of emotional disturbance, specific learning disabilities, other health impairment, and learning impairment, to The Zone in Barre, Vermont. This approval is for 17 months, through June 30, 2011.

Approval is subject to the condition that the school immediately report to the Department of Education whenever any changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166(b)
State Board Rule 2228 et. seq.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. The Zone is an integrated transitional mental health treatment facility and educational center, which will serve youth who pose a risk to schools and communities. These youth need a structured, secure environment in which to be successful in achieving academic, emotional, and social growth. The Zone will serve a maximum of 20 students ages 11-22 in grades 7-12, within the disability categories of emotional disturbance, specific learning disabilities, learning impairment, and other health impairment. The target population will be from the Washington County Mental Health Services' (WCMHS) catchment area, although they are willing to serve out-of-county youth on a space-available basis. WCMHS has multi-agency support for this program since there are no local programs for youth with severe emotional/physical destructive behavior and substance abuse/addiction.
2. On behalf of the Commissioner, Joan Larsen and Pat Pallas Gray visited the building that will house the program on November 16, 2009. Another site visit will be made when students are in attendance.

3. The Zone will be located on the first floor of a building located in Barre City. The space includes six work/study rooms, two group rooms, a student lounge, a timeout/relaxation room, a lunch room/kitchen, and staff offices. The handicapped accessible building will be staff secure, and the doors will be alarmed. The building is owned by WCMHS, meets all state and federal health and safety regulations, and is adequate to meet the needs of the program. A copy of the Certificate of Occupancy from the Division of Fire Safety for this space is on file at the department.
4. The minimum course of study, as prescribed in 16 V.S.A. §906, will be provided and adapted to the age and abilities of each student. Support services, including a basic resource/library computer lab, computers in each work/study room, and various multi-media forms, are in place. Other resources in the Central Vermont area will be utilized as needed.
5. The staff will include a full-time educational director, a full-time licensed special education case manager, educational instructors for the core subject areas and PE & fine arts consultants, individual behavioral interventionist/educational support specialists, and a full-time substance abuse counselor/case manager. The staff members will be overseen by a part-time director of adolescent therapeutic education and a part-time educational coordinator, who is licensed in special education. The Zone has a professional development program for the staff members, and staff members are encouraged to attend activities pertinent to their respective disciplines.
6. The Zone submitted information about its financial capacity for the period of approval.
7. The school will maintain an operating schedule that includes a total number of instructional hours each year which is not less than that required of a public school serving the same grades.
8. The student health, attendance, assessment, and the school fire drill records will be reviewed at the site visit to be made before June 30, 2010.
9. The Zone has a policy on the prevention of harassment of students that is as stringent as the department's model policy.
10. The Zone has developed policies for admissions, discipline and significant change in placement. These policies were reviewed and found to be appropriate.
11. The Zone will coordinate with Local Education Agencies (LEA) by maintaining educational records, participating in evaluation procedures, development IEPs and planning for reintegration, implementing IEPs, and providing prior notice to the sending LEA regarding the need for a change in a student's program or placement.

COST IMPLEMENTATIONS: None

STAFF AVAILABLE:

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent & Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of general Independent Kindergarten approval to the Mary Johnson Children's Center, Middlebury, Vermont?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Vermont State Board of Education grant renewal of general Independent Kindergarten approval to the Mary Johnson Children's Center in Middlebury, Vermont. This approval is for two years, through June 30, 2011.

Approval is subject to the condition that the school immediately report to the Department of Education whenever any changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. The Mary Johnson Children's Center has operated as a child care center since 1970. The Center's kindergarten program was initially approved by the State Board of Education in February of 1988. The last State Board approval was given on November 20, 2007 through June 30, 2009.
2. On behalf of the Commissioner, Pat Pallas Gray visited the Center on October 22, 2009.
3. The Mary Johnson Children's Center is housed in a renovated and expanded house on a quiet residential street in Middlebury. The site is handicapped accessible. The facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the students and meet state and federal health and safety regulations. The school is licensed by the Child Development Division of the Agency of Human Services through July, 2009.
4. At the time of the visit there were 17 students in attendance. The staff is well qualified for their positions. There are two co-directors, a licensed lead teacher, and two kindergarten assistants. The Center's philosophy is that given appropriate materials, well-defined spaces and a qualified, observant and sensitive staff, the primary learning at the kindergarten level will be achieved through play.

5. The minimum course of study, as prescribed in 16 V.S.A. §906, is provided and adapted to the age and abilities of the students.
6. The Center has submitted information about their financial capacity for the period of approval.
7. The health, safety, attendance, and assessment records are in good order.
8. The Center has a policy on prevention of harassment of students that is as stringent as the Department's model policy.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

STAFF AVAILABLE:

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent & Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the Vermont State Board of Education acknowledge that the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEAS&C) granted continuation of accreditation to the Green Mountain Valley School, Waitsfield, VT, to serve students in grades 7-12?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Vermont State Board of Education acknowledge that the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEAS&C) granted continuation of accreditation to the Green Mountain Valley School of Waitsfield, Vermont, to serve students in grades 7-12. This approval is for four years, through October 30, 2014, to coincide with the NEAS&C accreditation timelines.

Approval is subject to the condition that the school immediately report to the Department of Education whenever any changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration, during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166(b)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Green Mountain Valley School was initially granted independent school approval by the State Board of Education in 1977. The institution is a boarding school providing a full-time college preparatory program and a winter tutorial program for students in grades 8-12, who are involved in competitive skiing. The school is introducing a new three-month, seventh grade winter academy program this year which has no residential component.
2. Green Mountain Valley School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEAS&C), which is recognized by the Vermont State Board of Education for accrediting purposes per State Board of Education Rule #7320. Green Mountain Valley School was granted continued accreditation by NEAS&C in June of 2009. NEAS&C also accepted with thanks the special progress report that was received in October of 2009 detailing the curriculum and program for the new seventh grade winter academy. Other than routine annual reports, the school's accreditation will continue until the decennial evaluation visit scheduled for 2014.
3. The State Board of Education acknowledged the school's last accreditation by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEAS&C) on October 19, 2004, through June 30, 2009.

4. Green Mountain Valley School has a policy on prevention of harassment of students that is as stringent as the Department's model policy.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent and Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education acknowledge that an approved independent school operating under the name of Hull Crest in Winooski, VT, closed on December 18, 2009, and is no longer an approved independent school in Vermont?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education acknowledges that an approved independent school operating under the name of Hull Crest, in Winooski, VT, closed on December 18, 2009, and is no longer an approved independent school in Vermont.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166(b)
State Board Rule: 2228 et. seq.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Hull Crest School received approval as a general and special education independent school from the State Board of Education on January 20, 1998. The school has been continuously approved by the State Board since that date.
2. The Independent School Office was notified in writing in December of 2009 that Hull Crest School was closing on Friday, December 18, 2009.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

STAFF AVAILABLE:

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